

# **DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN**

**SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**INTRODUCTION**

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**THE FIVE STAGES OF A DISASTER**

**RISK AND VULNERABILITY**

**CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**MAINTAINING THE PLAN**

**APPENDIX**

## INTRODUCTION

**Mission Statement:** The United Methodist Church of South Carolina, working in conjunction with the emergency management community and other volunteer organizations, will provide physical and spiritual assistance to South Carolina communities and those beyond our State borders affected by a disaster.

Assistance will be provided in such a manner as to supplement and not interfere with public safety agencies and their work. It shall be offered and provided within selected specific strategies as identified by UMCOR, the Conference, Districts and each church in the SC Conference.

This document and the appendixes will be a guide for the development of district and local church plans.

The planning process will include: the planning team, assessing the mission, goals and objectives, development, preparation and review, implementation and annual critique and update.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**Goal:** Create a Conference Disaster Response plan that enables a missional response to a disaster in South Carolina.

**Objective:** Accomplish the Conference Mission and Goal through the use of:

Available Resources

Effective Communication

Reliable Partnerships

Christian Spiritual and Physical Caring

**Goal:** Create a Conference Plan that enables the development of **District and Local Church Plans**.

**Objective:** The Conference Plan will be provided as a template for District and Local Church Plans, and a sample local church plan will be included in the annex.

**Goal:** Educate the UM In SC as to the five stages of a disaster.

**Objective:** The five stages of a disaster will be identified in all local church plans and included in training and educational materials.

**Goal:** Identify the Risk and Vulnerability as best known by the Conference Disaster Response Team for the State of SC as a whole as well as coordinate the same at the District and Local Church level.

**Objective:** Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for the State as a whole will be included in the Conference Plan and the sample Local Church Plan.

**Goal:** Establish a Concept of Operations for the SC Disaster Response Plan.

**Objective:** The Concept of Operations will offer a brief detail of operations, communications and chain of command.

**Goal:** Create Roles and Responsibilities for the SC Disaster Response Plan.

**Objective:** Roles and Responsibilities are identified in the SC Plan and encouraged for the local church plan.

**Goal:** Maintaining the SC UMC Disaster Response Plan.

**Objective:** The SC Disaster (Emergency) Response Plan will be reviewed annually and potential changes will be presented to the Bishop and Cabinet.

**Goal:** Educate, train and equip the churches of the South Carolina Conference enabling them to assist in Relief and Recovery Efforts applicable church activity to assist the affected community to return to a sustainable daily life.

**Objective:** Training needs will be identified annually by the Conference DR Team and provisions will be made to deliver the appropriate training and education.

## THE FIVE STAGES OF A DISASTER

**Readiness** – The Readiness phase includes training, planning, practicing and equipping for any disaster; precautions are taken for potential events, including evacuation.

**Rescue** – The Rescue phase is best performed by local, state and federal public safety agencies. They are at work to preserve life and property, and other activity can hamper their efforts. Conference disaster ministry can begin to prepare for its mission.

**Relief** – The Relief stage includes crisis intervention, provision of shelter and housing, distribution of food and other necessities, assessment of the extent of damage, beginning the clean-up process with Early Response Teams and planning for long term recovery where needed.

**Recovery** – Survivors are assisted in rebuilding their structures and the functions of their daily lives as well as the functions of the community affected.

**Review** – The Review phase is an planned period following the relief and recovery phases where all actions are reviewed and ways to improve future readiness and response, as well as lessen the impact of future disasters.

To simplify this document, common terminology will be used to represent the disaster phases, roles and responsibilities as well as the corresponding activity, they are: “Before, During and After.”

**Before:** (Readiness)

**During:** (Rescue, Relief)

**After:** (Recovery, Review)

**NOTE:** The Federal Emergency Management Agency has identified Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response and Recovery as the stages of a disaster.

## **RISK AND VULNERABILITY**

**Disaster** – is a singular hazard event that results in extensive human losses or has overwhelming effects to property and the environment. It is important to point out that while disasters are generally considered to be of a large scale, smaller events such as the destruction of a church or a home are disasters to those individuals affected. Ultimately, all disasters are local events to those affected.

**Frequency** – is the annual calculated number of occurrences of a potential repeating event, based on the historic evidence.

**Hazard** – the potential danger or threat to communities and the inhabitants as well as the effect of an event to the environment.

**Recurrence** – an estimated number that assesses the possible interval between events based on the historic evidence.

**Risk** – the probability of incidence of a hazard or event to an identified geographic area or areas.

**Vulnerability** – the possibility for injury or damage created by a specific hazard or event to individuals or a community and the facilities therein.

The SC EMD has identified the following events as a minimum but not limited to as the Local Hazard Risk Assessment:

**Drought, Flooding, Hail, Heat, Hurricane, Severe Storm Lightening, Tornado, Fire, Wildfire, Wind, Winter Weather, Extreme Temperatures, Earthquake, Hazardous Materials, Terrorism, Civil Disturbance, Nuclear, Pandemic and Transportation related events.**

All community vulnerability is different as all communities are different. Each church and community is encouraged to do their own evaluation, and include the findings in the local church plan.

## **CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

The authority to approve the Conference Disaster Response Plan rests with the Bishop and Cabinet.

The Conference Plan will be coordinated with:

State and Local Emergency Management Agencies

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM)

Including the Early Response Teams

State and Local Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)

The Chain of Command for Disaster Response Activity is as follows:

Bishop and Cabinet

Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

District Disaster Response Team/Coordinators

Pastor and Local Church Disaster Response Coordinator

The local Church/Charge maintains the responsibility for their respective facilities, equipment and personnel unless otherwise requested for use at the District or Conference level.

A Disaster Call Center will be established with volunteers if needed, for receiving and recording disaster related information and updates.

Communication is critical to an effective response. Make plans now to communicate your status and contact information immediately before and after an event with those who need to know.

The Conference DR Team will create and maintain a list of contact numbers for those involved in the planning and implementation of the Conference and Local Church Plans, to be updated annually.

If you are in an evacuation area or your personal plan includes evacuation, communicate pertinent information: when you will plan to leave, where you're evacuating to, how to contact you, proposed plans to return, etc.

Personal safety and the safety of our homes and family always come first. Do not respond to DR activity until family is secure.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Conference Disaster Response Team consists of:

The Bishop at his or her discretion

One District Superintendent as appointed by the Bishop

The Conference Director of Connectional Ministries

The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

The Conference Director of Communications

The District Disaster Response Coordinators

The ERT Coordinator and Assistant

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM)

Conference Treasurer



## **Role of the Bishop**

### Primary Role:

Communication point for District Superintendents.

Conference spokesperson for the SC United Methodist response to the disaster, unless otherwise designated by the Bishop.

Ambassador to those found to be harmed by a statewide or local disaster.

### Before:

Along with the District Superintendents, ensure that all local churches have a written Disaster Response Plan and to share the plan with their District Office. All Local Church plans are to be generally consistent with the Conference Plan while it is not necessary that they exactly mirror the Conference Plan.

Encourage local churches to take advantage of DR training opportunities.

Establish a Communication Plan with all District Superintendents.

Secure a Conference DR location if activation is needed.

Secure a location for the Conference Office if the current facility is affected by an event.

Provide support for UMVIM and the ERT's.

### During:

Ensure communication is restored with District Offices.

When it is safe to do so, visit affected areas of the conference with the DS and/or other personnel to offer support and encouragement.

In accordance with communication plan, contact District Superintendents in affected areas for status updates and damage assessment.

Ensure the Disaster Response Team is activated to assist as needed.

**After:**

Provide spiritual and emotional support for the DR Team, District Offices, Clergy, UMVIM, ERT's and the Local Churches affected clergy and families.

Encourage local church participation in long-term recovery in the affected areas or for the affected individuals as appropriate.

**Role of the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator**

**Primary Role:**

Exercise general supervision for the Conference disaster response and the Conference DR Team, in the event of disaster.

Working with the Director of Connectional Ministries, is the liaison between the Conference DR Team and the Bishop and Cabinet.

With the assistance of the Conference Director of Connectional Ministries, identify 2 additional persons who can serve as the Conference DRC.

**Before:**

Assist the Conference DR Team to share with districts and local churches the work of the DR Team and the Conference Plan.

Working with the Conference DR Team, develop partnerships with other volunteer agencies that are active after a disaster.

Identify one and possibly two individuals who can provide back up serving as the Conference DRC.

Working with the Conference DR Team, plan appropriate disaster trainings.

Work with District Superintendents to identify willing and enthusiastic individuals to serve as District Disaster Response Coordinators.

Set quarterly meetings for the Conference DR Team.

With assistance from the Bishop and the Conference Treasurer secure a Conference DR location (Emergency Operations Center) if activation is needed; including the needs for staffing, equipment and supplies.

**During:**

Assure the safety and security of family before responding.

Provide general guidance to the Conference Director of Communications for disseminating disaster response information.

Provide general guidance and assistance to the coordinator of the SC ERT's as well as those responding from other states to SC.

Exercise general supervision of the DR Team for DR Activity.

If possible and safe, visit the affected area or areas.

Coordinate with the Bishop if an invitation for assistance needs to be made to UMCOR/UMVIM.

Working with the Director of Connectional Ministries and the Bishop, make the decision whether or not to open a Conference Emergency Call Center.

**After:**

Provide assistance to all areas of local disaster response.

Provide after action reporting to the Bishop and Cabinet.

Provide general guidance to the Conference DR Team for post-action evaluation, collecting lessons learned, and Plan revision.

Work with Bishop to publicly acknowledge the individual and group DR efforts.

Coordinate with UMVIM Chairperson for long-term recovery efforts.

## **Role of the Conference Disaster Response Team (District Response Coordinators)**

### Primary Role:

Working with the Conference DRC, Prepare and update the Conference Disaster Response Plan.

Provide for DR training and education for the SC Conference of the UMC, to include programs available through UMCOR and or UVMIM.

In coordination with the Conference Communications Director, establish a communication plan for DR before, during and after an event.

Working with the Conference DRC, the Bishop and Cabinet - Coordinate the response of the SC United Methodist Churches in the conference in cooperation with local and state agencies and organizations also responding to the disaster.

DRC's will work closely with the District Superintendent to organize and execute Conference and District efforts.

### Before:

Ensure the DR Conference plan is shared with all local churches.

Deliver and communicate training opportunities for local churches and volunteers.

Encourage local churches to have a written DR plan for and share that plan with their District DR Coordinator, District Office and the Conference Disaster Response Team.

Maintain and update the Conference DR Plan to include:

- An established communication plan between the local church, district office(s) and the Conference DR Team.
- Recording and receipt of donations.
- Organized requests for assistance and deployment of resources.
- Proved support for the training and organization of ERT's.

Secure physical work area should activation be needed.

Secure volunteers for the Call Center if needed.

Assist the Conference DRC to develop partnerships with other volunteer agencies that are active after a disaster.

**During:**

Determine if communication has been restored with the districts in the affected areas.

Working with the Conference DRC, coordinate the conference response to an event.

Work within the assigned District to coordinate response efforts.

Promote the gathering and sharing of damage assessment and other related response and recovery information.

Identify volunteers and activate the Call Center if needed.

Assist the Conference DRC with communication with other state and local response agencies.

Coordinating shipment and receipt of supplies and donations.

Assist in the deployment of specialized teams such as ERT's.

Assist in Damage Assessment activity.

Assist in acquiring local housing for DR persons as needed.

Collaborate with district DRC's to identify possible staging areas for supplies, donations, volunteers, etc.

Execute a policy of Defer and Refer, so as to utilize resources where they are most needed.

**After:**

Work with the Conference DRC, District Offices, District DRC's, Bishop and appropriate conference staff to evaluate the conference response to the disaster and adjust the plan to reflect lessons learned.

Assist districts with the research for long-term recovery assistance, resources, etc.

**Role of the Conference Director of Connectional Ministries**

**Primary Role:**

Provide for support to the Conference DR Team.

Works with the Conference DRC to liaison with the Bishop and Cabinet.

**Before:**

Assist with the provision of a physical work area (EOC) should activation be needed, to include a Call Center.

Assist with securing volunteers for the Call Center if needed.

**During:**

Assist the Conference DR Team with any needs for financial assistance if needed during an event. Notify the Conference Treasurer of any needs during an event.

Assist the Conference DR Team in maintaining communications with Districts.

**After:**

Assist the Conference DR Team with the assimilation and review of after-action reporting.

Work with Bishop and Cabinet to have all involved leadership and conference groups recognized for their DR efforts.

## **Role of the District Superintendent**

### Primary Role:

Communication point to the Bishop and DR Team and pastoral support for pastors serving in the district and local church.

### Before:

Identify and appoint a District DR Coordinator, and at least one back-up.

Working with Clergy, identify and appoint Local Church DR Coordinator.

Ensure that all Local Churches have in place a written DR Plan, and it is included in the Charge Conference for annual approval.

Encourage Local Churches to participate in DR Training and Education.

Confirm all contact information.

### During:

Establish Communication with the DRC, churches and clergy in the affected area.

Working with the DR Team, Clergy and the Local Church DR Coordinator, ensure that Local Churches work within the emergency management process when disaster strikes and discourage self-deployment. Encourage contact with the vulnerable members of the congregation and community.

Working with the Bishop, the Conference DR Coordinator and the Conference DR team...activate the Conference DR Plan.

Confirm Damage Assessment information is collected – represents physical, spiritual and emotional needs; share with Conference DR Team as soon as possible. Includes church property.

Ensure the Local Church does not interfere with local public safety disaster response activity.

Assist the local Church with the execution of its DR mission.

Assist the Local Church with coordinating assistance to local church members and the affected community.

Contact Conference Disaster Response Team for assistance as needed.

If the call center has been activated, encourage churches with damage or other needs to contact the call center.

#### After:

Continue to provide emotional and spiritual support to clergy and Local Church families as needed.

Encourage and assist pastors to monitor their emotional needs.

Coordinate fill-in pulpit supply as needed as soon as feasible to pastors in the hardest hit areas.

Communicate with Conference Disaster Response Team any unmet needs that arise or areas that may need additional resources or other assistance immediately after and long term.

### **Role of Local Clergy**

Primary Role:

Provide spiritual guidance and support to the local church and community.

Ensure the development of a local church DR Plan and the appointment of a DR Coordinator; share with District Superintendent and Conference DR Team.

With the cooperation of the congregation, develop a church mission in the event of a disaster.

In time of disaster, the pastor and church members will first address the safety and personal needs of themselves and their families and do so before addressing the church's and community's needs.



As we help our community to return to normal, the pastor is expected to take regular breaks from pastoral responsibilities in order to ensure his/her own physical, mental and spiritual health.

**Before:**

Become familiar with the Local and Conference DR Plan.

Identify special needs of the local church and community.

Working with Local trustees, ensure the best protection for local church facilities as well as insurance protection.

Coordinate DR training and education for the local church.

Assist the Local Church DRC and the Trustees with damage assessment of all church facilities and a general assessment community wide.

The pastor and head usher will develop plans to respond to emergencies or situations of imminent danger during worship services. They will train the ushers in the procedures and review these plans twice a year.

The pastor and the Disaster Response Coordinator will develop and maintain a list of special-needs or homebound members of the congregation, and potential needs.

**During:**

Establish communication with the District Superintendent.

Report damage assessment information to District Superintendent and District DR Coordinator.

Coordinate with the Trustees the security of all church facilities.

Gather a general assessment of the needs of the community, to include food, housing, etc.

Provide the pastoral presence in the congregation and the community.

The pastor or designated members of the congregation will make contact with special needs or homebound individuals or their care-givers determine their plans and learn how the church might respond to their needs.

Our pastor will maintain the church's regular worship schedule following a disaster, using an alternative location if necessary and hold one or more special worship services to address the spiritual needs of the congregation, the community and those taking part in disaster relief.

In case a disaster makes church facilities unsafe for use, the pastor will locate and announce an alternative location for worship.

#### After:

Keep the District Superintendent and the District DRC informed of the local recovery effort.

Resume pastoral duties as soon as possible.

Provide directional assistance for volunteer teams.

Provide for the collection of disaster related information, and share with the District Superintendent and the District DRC.

### **Role of the Local Church Disaster Response Coordinator**

Primary Role:

Serves as the communication liaison between the local church and the District DR Coordinator.

Coordinate the preparation of the Local Church DR Plan.

Ensure the church has a plan to respond and provide assistance to their congregation and a "Mission" for assistance to the community.

#### Before:

Working with the pastor, identify a church disaster team.

Working with the pastor, communicate the local church plan with church leadership and the congregation.

Take advantage of opportunities for training and education to improve DR capability, and encourage the congregation to do the same.

If a disaster seems imminent, working with the pastor, make contact with the congregation and Trustees, for preparation activity.

Develop a policy for:

- Referring people in need who contact the local church, and the respective agencies.
- Managing volunteers who contact the church.
- The distribution of supplies offered to the church.

The church will partner with a local individual or agency to provide Basic First Aid and CPR training at least once a year.

As part of this plan, the pastor and Church Council will develop and maintain a telephone calling tree so that information can be disseminated in advance of a disaster such as a storm or as soon as possible following the disaster.

Maintain lists of congregational members who are certified for AED, CPR and First Aid.

Recruit members of the congregation to take part in UMVIM teams and other teams which respond to disasters in other communities.

Consider the development of a Disaster Response Committee for the church. If it seems best to form the committee, bring a proposal to the pastor and the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development. Chair the committee if one is formed.

**During:**

Working with the pastor, contact your District DRC if you need assistance.

If needed, secure a DR physical work area.

Determine if communication capabilities have been restored.

Activate the church plan.

Create a list of vulnerable or special needs people in your church or community and assign someone to check on them if possible before, during and after an event.

Gather damage assessment information.

Maintain communications with the District DRC.

Per the local church plan, and in coordination with the pastor and DRC:

- Work with other responding organizations to identify and meet basic needs for food, water, temporary shelter, etc.
- Working with the pastor, delegate someone to keep a separate accounting of disaster funding received, documenting all expenditures and including receipts where possible.
- Contact DDRC for assistance from ERT's if needed based on damage assessment.
- Working with the pastor, communicate regularly with your District DRC about needs and activities in the affected area.
- Refer media inquiries to the pastor or the District DRC.

After:

Working with the pastor and the District DRC, evaluate the level of involvement appropriate for your church in long-term recovery.

Working with the pastor, consider referring people in need who contact the church to the appropriate agency.

Working with the local church DR team, manage the volunteers who contact the church and are available to help.

Working with the local church DR team, manage the distribution of supplies offered to the church.

If your church is not in the disaster area, determine level of involvement for your church in long-term recovery in affected areas (providing work teams, supplies, funds, etc.). Contact the District DRC to coordinate the same.

When time permits, review and update the local church DR Plan.

## **Role of the Trustees**

Primary Role:

Along with our pastor, the Trustees are responsible for all church property.

With guidance from the local church plan and from the Disaster Response Coordinator, the Trustees are responsible all the efforts we take to reduce the impact of a possible disaster upon the people of our church, and our facilities and ministries.

**Before:**

As indicated in the *Book of Discipline* the Trustees will keep inventories of church property and maintain adequate casualty insurance, as well as do an annual inspection of church facilities for improvements or updates.

If the church houses a daycare or other childcare program, the church's plan should indicate that the director of the program will identify a tornado-safe room in the building and rehearse evacuation procedures on a regular basis.

In case a tropical storm or hurricane is imminent, the Trustees will secure all windows and doors and shut off all utilities as deemed pertinent.

**During:**

As soon as possible following a disaster the Trustees will assess damage; report it to the insurance company, the church DRC, the pastor and the district office.

If a representative of the American Red Cross, UMVIM or other church agency, or a government agency requests use of our facilities following a disaster for the purpose of relief work, our pastor, DRC and/or Board of Trustees chairperson will determine the appropriate response and establish understandings which will guide the use of our facilities.

### After:

Consider improvements to local church facilities to harden the facilities for future disasters.

Evaluate and administer repairs to damage caused by any disaster.

Evaluate church facility insurance for appropriate levels of coverage.

## **MAINTAINING THE PLAN**

The development and implementation of a disaster response plan is an ongoing process. The plan will evolve and need to be updated as lessons are learned and experience is gained; possibly requiring a change to a course of action or the identification of priorities.

Maintenance and review for Plan content and reoccurring activities should be accomplished by the Disaster Response Team no less than once a year.

Additional review is also generally indicated after actual events, changes in policy or personnel, the identification of additional facilities, or a significant change to the size of membership.

To maintain consistency, the Conference Disaster Response Team will provide for the necessary training at the District and Local Church level to insure any needed updates are shared and implemented locally.

## **APPENDIX** (Work in Progress)

Definitions and Acronyms: DRC, DDRRC, DS, CDRC, CERT, UMVIM, UMCOR, ERT, EMD, NIMS, ICS, etc.

Training (Place Holder for Training Programs)

Incident Command System (Place holder for ICS information)

ERT (Place holder for a description of what are ERT's and listing of ERT's, call sequence and equipment)

Memorandums of Understanding (Place holder for MOU's/Partnerships)

UMCOR (Place holder for further information)

UMVIM (Place holder for further information)

Evacuation (Place holder for link to SC EMD Evacuation information)

Spiritual and Emotional Care

National Incident Management System

Incident Command System

Mitigation Efforts

Forms and Documents

## SAMPLE LOCAL CHURCH DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN

CHURCH \_\_\_\_\_

CHARGE CONFERENCE APPROVAL \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

### INTRODUCTION

**Mission Statement:** The United Methodist Church of South Carolina, working in conjunction with the emergency management community, will provide physical and spiritual assistance to South Carolina communities and those beyond our State borders affected by a disaster.

Assistance will be provided in such a manner as to supplement and not interfere with public safety agencies and their work. It shall be offered and provided within specific strategies as defined by the Conference, Districts and each church in the SC Conference.

The planning process will include: the planning team, assessing the mission, goals and objectives, development, preparation and review, implementation and annual critique and update.

The sample local church plan is intended to be a guide for local churches. The Local Church Disaster Response Team, working with the District DRC will exercise discretion in making changes or deleting certain items to make it applicable the Local Church.

Goals and objectives, the stages of a disaster, risk and vulnerability, and concept of operations originated in the Conference Plan. They are included in the sample local church plan and may be edited or deleted at the discretion of the local church team.



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**Goal:** Create a Local Disaster Response plan that enables a missional response to a disaster in the community and beyond.

**Objective:** Accomplish the local Mission through the use of:

Available Resources

Effective Communication

Reliable Partnerships

Christian Spiritual and Physical Caring

**Goal:** Educate the Local Church as to the five stages of a disaster.

**Objective:** The five stages of a disaster will be identified in all local church plans and included in training and educational materials.

**Goal:** Identify the Risk and Vulnerability as best known by the Local Church.

**Objective:** Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for the State as a whole will be included in Local Church Plan.

**Goal:** Establish a Concept of Operations for the Local Church Plan.

**Objective:** The Concept of Operations will offer a brief detail of operations, communications and chain of command.

**Goal:** Identify Roles and Responsibilities for the Local Church Plan.

**Objective:** Roles and Responsibilities are identified and included in the Local Church Plan.

**Goal:** Maintaining the Local Church Plan.

**Objective:** The Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

**Goal:** Train and equip the local church; to assist the affected community in the reduction of the loss of life, injury and the loss of property and to return to a sustainable daily life.

**Objective:** Training needs will be identified by the Conference DR Team and enhanced by the local church.

**Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Objective:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Objective:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Objective:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Objective:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## THE FIVE STAGES OF A DISASTER

**Readiness** – The Readiness phase includes training, planning, practicing and equipping for any disaster; precautions are taken for potential events, including evacuation.

**Rescue** – The Rescue phase is best performed by local, state and federal public safety agencies. They are at work to preserve life and property, and other activity can hamper their efforts. Conference disaster ministry can begin to prepare for its mission.

**Relief** – The Relief stage includes crisis intervention, provision of shelter and housing, distribution of food and other necessities, assessment of the extent of damage, beginning the cleanup process with Early Response Teams and planning for long term recovery where needed.

**Recovery** – Survivors are assisted in rebuilding their structures and the functions of their daily lives as well as the functions of the community affected.

**Review** – The Review phase is an planned period following the relief and recovery phases where all actions are reviewed and ways to improve future readiness and response, as well as lessen the impact of future disasters.

To simplify this document, common terminology will be used to represent the disaster phases and the corresponding activity, they are: “Before, During and After.”

**Before:** (Readiness)

**During:** (Rescue, Relief)

**After:** (Recovery, Review)

**NOTE:** The Federal Emergency Management Agency has identified Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response and Recovery as the stages of a disaster.

**RISK AND VULNERABILITY**

**Disaster** – is a singular hazard event that results in extensive human losses or has overwhelming effects to property and the environment. It is important to point out that while disasters are generally considered to be of a large scale, smaller events such as the destruction of a church or a home are disasters to those individuals affected.

**Frequency** – is the annual calculated number of occurrences of a potential repeating event, based on the historic evidence.

**Hazard** – the potential danger or threat to communities and the inhabitants as well as the effect of an event to the environment.

**Recurrence** – an estimated number that assesses the possible interval between events based on the historic evidence.

**Risk** – the probability of incidence of a hazard or event to an identified geographic area or areas.

**Vulnerability** – the possibility for injury or damage created by a specific hazard or event to individuals or a community and the facilities therein.

The State of SC has identified the following events as a minimum but not limited to as the Local Hazard Risk Assessment. All community vulnerability is different as all communities are different. Each church and community is encouraged to do their own evaluation, and include the findings in the local church plan.

**Drought, Flooding, Hail, Heat, Hurricane, Severe Storm Lightening, Tornado, Fire, Wildfire, Wind, Winter Weather, Extreme Temperatures, Earthquake, Hazardous Materials, Terrorism, Civil Disturbance, Nuclear, Pandemic and Transportation related events.**

**Risk:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Vulnerability:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

The authority to approve the Local Church Disaster Response Plan rests with the Charge Conference.

The Local Plan will be coordinated with:

The Conference Disaster Response Plan

State and Local Emergency Management Agencies

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) Including the Early Response Teams

State and Local Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)

The Conference Chain of Command for Disaster Response Activity is as follows:

Bishop and Cabinet

Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

District Disaster Response Team/Coordinators

Pastor and Local Church Disaster Response Coordinator

The local Church/Charge maintains the responsibility for their respective facilities, equipment and personnel unless otherwise requested for use at the District or Conference level.

Facilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A local or district Disaster Call Center or Phone Tree will be established with volunteers if needed, for receiving and recording disaster related information and updates.

Communication is critical to an effective response. Make plans now to communicate your status and contact information immediately before and after an event with those who need to know.

Maintain a list of contact information for those involved in the planning and implementation of the Local Church Plans, to be update annually and reported to the CDRC. (See Appendix)

If you are in an evacuation area or your personal plan includes evacuation, communicate pertinent information with the District Superintendent and the District DRC: when you will plan to leave, where you're evacuating to, how to contact you, proposed plans to return, etc.

Personal safety and the safety of our homes and family always come first. Do not respond to DR activity until family is secure.

The Pastor and the DR Coordinator will keep on hand documents that provide the roles, procedures and contact information for other local agencies. These include government and non-government agencies, the district and the South Carolina Conference.

The DRC, pastor and Board of Trustees chair will explore the possibility of church facilities being used by ERT's and other agencies such as the American Red Cross or other agencies for post-disaster sheltering or feeding. If an agreement is reached, then these persons will review it on a timely basis.

Facilities (Appendix):

---



---

The Church Disaster Response Coordinator, Board of Trustees Chair, Finance Chair and Pastor will meet at least twice a year to review this disaster response plan and confirm its implementation at all levels.

If the Church Council elects a Disaster Response Committee, the committee will be accountable to the Charge Conference through the Church Council. The Board of Trustees will elect a representative to serve on the committee, and the DRC will serve as chairperson. The committee will meet with the pastor at least twice a year, review this plan and update it as warranted.

## ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Suggestion:** Your church may wish to identify various other church officers and assign to them some of the roles and responsibilities listed below. For example, the music director may be given responsibilities to protect musical equipment in advance of or following a storm or fire.

### Role of Local Clergy

Primary Role:

Provide spiritual guidance and support to the local church and community.

Ensure the development of a local church DR Plan and the appointment of a DR Coordinator; share with District Superintendent and Conference DR Team.

With the cooperation of the congregation, develop a church mission in the event of a disaster.

In time of disaster, the pastor and church members will first address the safety and personal needs of themselves and their families and do so before addressing the church's and community's needs.

As we help our community to return to normal, the pastor is expected to take regular breaks from pastoral responsibilities in order to ensure his/her own physical, mental and spiritual health.

---

---

---

**Before:**

Become familiar with the Conference and Local DR Plan.

Identify special needs of the local church and community.

Working with Local trustees, ensure the best protection for local church facilities as well as insurance protection.

Coordinate DR training and education for the local church.

Assist the Local Church DRC and the Trustees with damage assessment of all church facilities and a general assessment community wide.

The pastor and the Finance Committee will develop procedures to back up all financial files and membership records on a weekly if not daily basis.

The pastor and head usher will develop plans to respond to emergencies or situations of imminent danger during worship services. They will train the ushers in the procedures and review these plans twice a year.

The pastor and the Disaster Response Coordinator will develop and maintain a list of special-needs or homebound members of the congregation, and potential needs.

---

---

---

### **During:**

Establish communication with the District Superintendent.

Report damage assessment information to District Superintended and District DR Coordinator.

Coordinate with the Trustees the security of all church facilities.

Gather a general assessment of the needs of the community, to include food, housing, etc.

Provide the pastoral presence in the congregation and the community.

The pastor or designated members of the congregation will make contact with special needs or homebound individuals or their care-givers determine their plans and learn how the church might respond to their needs.



Our pastor will maintain the church’s regular worship schedule following a disaster, using an alternative location if necessary and hold one or more special worship services to address the spiritual needs of the congregation, the community and those taking part in disaster relief.

In case a disaster makes church facilities unsafe for use, the pastor will locate and announce an alternative location for worship.

---

---

---

**After:**

Keep the District Superintendent and the District DRC informed of the local recovery effort.

Resume pastoral duties as soon as possible.

Provide directional assistance for volunteer teams.

Provide for the collection of disaster related information, and share with the District Superintendent and the District DRC.

---

---

---

**Role of the Local Church Disaster Response Coordinator**

Primary Role:

Serves as the communication liaison between the local church and the District DR Coordinator.

Coordinate the preparation of the Local Church DR Plan.

Ensure the church has a plan to respond and provide assistance to their congregation and a “Mission” for assistance to the community.

---

---

---

**Before:**

Working with the pastor, identify a church disaster team.

Working with the pastor, communicate the local church plan with church leadership and the congregation.

Take advantage of opportunities for training and education to improve DR capability, and encourage the congregation to do the same.

If a disaster seems imminent, working with the pastor, make contact with the congregation for preparation activity.

Develop a policy for:

- Referring people in need who contact the local church, and the respective agencies.
- Managing volunteers who contact the church.
- The distribution of supplies offered to the church.

The church will partner with a local individual or agency to provide Basic First Aid and CPR training at least once a year.

As part of this plan, the pastor and Church Council will develop and maintain a telephone calling tree so that information can be disseminated in advance of a disaster such as a storm or as soon as possible following the disaster.

Maintain lists of congregational members who are certified for AED, CPR and First Aid.

Recruit members of the congregation to take part in UMVIM teams and other teams which respond to disasters in other communities.

Consider the development of a Disaster Response Committee for the church. If it seems best to form the committee, bring a proposal to the pastor and the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development. Chair the committee if one is formed.

---

---

---

**During:**

Working with the pastor, contact your District DRC if you need assistance.

If needed, secure a DR physical work area.

Determine if communication capabilities have been restored.

Activate the church plan.

Create a list of vulnerable or special needs people in your church or community and assign someone to check on them if possible before, during and after an event.

Gather damage assessment information.

Maintain communications with the District DRC.

Per the local church plan, and in coordination with the pastor and DRC:

- Work with other responding organizations to identify and meet basic needs for food, water, temporary shelter, etc.
- Working with the pastor, delegate someone to keep a separate accounting of disaster funding received, documenting all expenditures and including receipts where possible.
- Contact DDRC for assistance from ERT's if needed, based on damage assessment.
- Working with the pastor, communicate regularly with your District DRC about needs and activities in the affected area.
- Refer media inquiries to the pastor or the District DRC.

---

---

---

**After:**

Working with the pastor and the District DRC Disaster Recovery Ministry, evaluate the level of involvement appropriate for your church in long-term recovery.

Working with the pastor, consider referring people in need who contact the church to the appropriate agency.

Working with the local church DR team, manage the volunteers who contact the church and are available to help.

Working with the local church DR team, manage the distribution of supplies offered to the church.

If your church is not in the disaster area, determine level of involvement for your church in long-term recovery in affected areas (providing work teams, supplies, funds, etc.). Contact the District DRC to coordinate the same.

When time permits, review and update the local church DR Plan.

---

---

---

**Role of the Trustees**

**Primary Role:**

Along with our pastor, the Trustees are responsible for all church property.

With guidance from the local church plan and from the Disaster Response Coordinator, the Trustees are responsible all the efforts we take to reduce the impact of a possible disaster upon the people of our church, and our facilities and ministries.

---

---

---

**Before:**

As indicated in the *Book of Discipline* the Trustees will keep inventories of church property and maintain adequate casualty insurance, as well as do an annual inspection of church facilities for improvements or updates.

If the church houses a daycare or other childcare program, the church's plan should indicate that the director of the program will identify a tornado-safe room in the building and rehearse evacuation procedures on a regular basis.

In case a tropical storm or hurricane is imminent, the Trustees will secure all windows and doors and shut off all utilities as deemed pertinent.

---

---

---

**During:**

As soon as possible following a disaster the Trustees will assess damage; report it to the insurance company, the church DRC, the pastor and the district office.

If a representative of the American Red Cross, UMVIM or other church agency, or a government agency requests use of our facilities following a disaster for the purpose of relief work, our pastor, DRC and/or Board of Trustees chairperson will determine the appropriate response and establish understandings which will guide the use of our facilities.

---

---

---

After:

Consider improvements to local church facilities to harden the facilities for future disasters.

Evaluate and administer repairs to damage caused by any disaster.

Evaluate church facility insurance for appropriate levels of coverage.

---

---

---

**MAINTAINING THE PLAN**

The development and implementation of a disaster response plan is an ongoing process. The plan will evolve and need to be updated as lessons are learned and experience is gained; possibly requiring a change to a course of action or the identification of priorities.

Maintenance and review for Plan content and reoccurring activities should be accomplished by the Disaster Response Team no less than once a year.

Additional review is also generally indicated after actual events, changes in policy or personnel, the identification of additional facilities, or a significant change to the size of membership.

To maintain consistency, the Conference Disaster Response Team will provide for the necessary training at the District and Local Church level to insure any needed updates are shared and implemented locally.

## **APPENDIX**

Definitions and Acronyms: DRC, DDRC, DS, CDRC, CERT, UMVIM, UMCOR, ERT, EMD, NIMS, ICS, etc.

Training (Place Holder for Training Programs)

Incident Command System (Place holder for ICS information)

ERT (Place holder for a description and listing of ERT's and equipment)

Memorandums of Understanding (Place holder for MOU's/Partnerships)

UMCOR (Place holder for further information)

UMVIM (Place holder for further information)

Evacuation (Place holder for SC EMD Evacuation information)

State and Local Emergency Management Agencies Contact Information

Mitigation Efforts

Incident Command System

Local Church Facilities

---

---

Maintain a list of current church facilities and equipment.

Local Church Contact Information

---

---

Maintain a current list of contact information for those involved in the planning and implementation of the Local Church Plans, to be update annually and reported to the CDRC.

## Other Appendices

---

---

---

### **Questions to consider as you develop your church's disaster response plan:**

1. Has your congregation elected a Disaster Response Coordinator (DRC) and given him/her a list of duties and responsibilities?
2. Have you decided to form a Disaster Response Committee for your congregation? If so, what will its duties be? How often will it meet with the pastor and representative of the Board of Trustees in order to review and update your disaster response plan?
3. Do you have adequate insurance for all church facilities, including the parsonage, and do you know how to contact your insurance carrier?
4. How will you communicate with members of your congregation, particularly if power or phone service is disrupted?
5. How will you help your congregation to evacuate or prepare if a storm threatens your area?
6. How will you secure and back up your church records?
7. How will your church be a "mission station"?
8. How will you partner with neighboring churches?
9. How will you tell your story?
10. A note for clergy: Is your personal emergency contact information (including your cell number and your e-mail address) up-to-date with the conference and your district office and available to all members of the congregation.



